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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR S/CT, EUR/SE, EUR/PGI

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TAGS: PTER PGOV ASEC GR

SUBJECT: GREECE/TERRORISM: NOVEMBER 17 SOUNDS OFF,
REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE STRIKES AGAIN?

Classified By: A/Pol Counselor Jeff Hovenier for reasons 1.4(b&d).

Summary

¶1. (SBU) An imprisoned assassin from Greece's most famous domestic terrorist group, November 17 (17N), recently published an unrepentant manifesto in a Greek newspaper, while another group with a similar ideology, Revolutionary Struggle (RS), may have launched a new bomb attack, possibly its first in some time. These two events underscore why domestic terrorism remains high on our agenda and that of Greek security forces. End Summary.

November 17: Continue the Revolution

¶2. (U) Currently in prison for murder, 17N terrorist Dimitris Koufodinas published a page-long screed, accompanied by an interview, in the October 31 issue of "Proto Thema" newspaper. Koufodinas called for "immediate actions, to strike at the capitalist system in any way." Rather than expressing remorse or renouncing violence, Koufodinas instead spoke positively about his terrorist past, telling the interviewer that 17N's celebrated relics -- the .45 pistol used in the 1975 assassination of U.S. official Richard Welch and other attacks, the typewriter, and the stamps, none of which have been recovered by police -- remain in a "safe place" awaiting the day when the "revolution" will open its own museum, a small corner of which will be dedicated to these prized mementos.

Revolutionary Struggle Fingerprints on a New Attack?

¶3. (SBU) Police carried out a controlled detonation of a powerful bomb found at the Athens offices of the oil company Shell on October 24, after receiving an anonymous tip. Greek police have not yet concluded the forensic examination, but FBI explosives investigators discussed the case with them and the components of the bomb are similar to ones previously made by RS. RS has claimed responsibility for a number of terrorist acts in the past, including the January 2007 RPG attack on the U.S. Embassy. It is possible that in the end police will be unable to tie the Shell bomb definitively to RS, but both the Greek police and FBI examiners agree that it is likely the same bomb maker. This is a change from most investigations of Athens bombings in recent months, in which police had been unable to find RS links. Police suspicions are outlined in an article (unsourced but with some plausible details) in the October 26 issue of "Ethnos tis Kiriakis." According to the article, police are concerned because the specter of a new wave of RS attacks suggests that the police may not have as good an understanding of RS membership and activities as they had thought.

Comment

¶4. (C) Greece has a substantial number of anarchist and extreme left groups who advocate and engage in violence on a fairly regular basis against targets that symbolize authority

and globalization. 17N and RS represent the extreme and have used particularly violent tactics. They have also made a specific point to target the USG in the past. 17N is responsible for the deaths of five U.S. Embassy personnel, including Welch and two Defense Attaches, while RS has attacked the Embassy with an RPG. These two recent events -- a vocal call to arms by a leading 17N figure and a possible new case of RS violence -- came very close together. While it is always prudent to take Greek conspiracy theories with a grain of salt, some of our Greek interlocutors have suggested that the timing may not be a coincidence.

SPECKHARD